

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Honorable Sandra H. Storm

Jefferson County Courthouse
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Birmingham, AL 35204
(205) 325-5538



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Betsy Mcleod

Executive Director: Susan Cotton

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Community collaboration
2. Child health
3. After school enrichment

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.

Health - Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

School health network

Policy Council Action Steps:

- explore feasibility of a school health network
- define the health committee's role in the school health network
- identify and recruit representatives from organizations such as school nurses association, Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation Children's Services Division, Children's Hospital Pediatric Pulmonary Center, etc. to help develop concept of school health network
- recruit representatives from Jefferson County's 13 school systems to participate in the school health network
- determine if participation school districts will have weighted membership and if so, an equitable formula
- compile and generate data to assist with funding pursuits

Integrate mental health and co-occurring substance abuse into the health care system

Policy Council Action Steps:

- explore use of "Bright Futures" as a foundation/format for integrating health and mental health/substance abuse, including reviewing the evidence base for its concepts, and discussing "lessons learned" with those who have begun to implement concepts
- invite key representative from the mental health community to meet with the health committee
- explore effectiveness of school-based mental health programs such as COPE with representatives from Birmingham City and Jefferson County School Systems
- compile data re: cost-savings resulting from programs such as COPE
- substance abuse prevention, planning, and coordination
- publicize the fact that evidence-based interventions e.g., violence prevention, anger management, etc. can be taught
- compile a list of available mental health services including wait list data
- identify gaps in existing mental health services
- improve mental health knowledge base of non-mental health providers who deal with children's health issues
- public awareness of need for mental health care for all children
- educate non-mental health providers on resources available for mental health care

Children's health insurance programs

Policy Council Action Steps:

- identify reasons for decline in applications to ALL Kids
- develop strategies to ensure accurate communication regarding status of ALL Kids and other children's health insurance programs

Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Positively impact the execution, by law enforcement and the courts, of relevant domestic violence laws

Policy Council Action Steps:

- sponsor a study to verify the problem. The study will document and define the nature of the problem
- establish a coalition of stakeholders to plan an approach to solving the identified problem
- implement a planning process to address the problem and develop a solution
- report to the Children's Policy Council regarding a planned approach to the problem

Education - Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Facilitate linkage of educators and other professional staff to resources that promote best practices in quality education

Policy Council Action Steps:

- research existing professional development resources
- survey each of the county's twelve school systems to identify professional development efforts
- judiciously share information obtained with school systems and CPC membership

Facilitate student and family ready access to after school programs

Policy Council Action Steps:

- share information about Childcare Resources Resource and Referral Department to CPC members through e-mail network
- for a specific school: determine the number of children participating in after school programs, establish a goal for increasing the number of children participating in such programs, identify methods for making parents and teachers aware of after school programs, evaluate, if successful replicate
- share results with funders such as United Way, CVS and Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham as well as with Community Education staff from the various school systems

Early Care and Education - Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Support and expand existing efforts to provide comprehensive screening of preschool children in the areas of vision, hearing, dental, development, speech, language, mental health, etc.

Policy Council Action Steps:

- develop and provide training to increase awareness of the value of screenings
- identify current screening efforts
- conduct meetings with those currently conducting screenings
- plan strategies for implementing select screenings

Continue development of fully functioning early care and education network that collaborates with others to positively impact the quality and coordination of child care in the community

Policy Council Action Steps:

- determine how to increase membership and participation
- identify gaps in membership
- plan and implement regular meetings

Empower early care and education professionals to advocate for what they need to perform their jobs effectively

Policy Council Action Steps:

- annually identify priorities and set proactive agenda
- share and disseminate information about issues and activities related to Early Care and Education with child care professionals and the community at large
- partner with other agencies/organizations to plan, organize, support and/or implement activities in conjunction with events such as Week of the Young Child and AAYC Public Policy Forum
- develop or recommend development of training when the need for such presents itself

Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

System-wide coordination with the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board for job readiness, marketable skills and employment services available for youth

Policy Council Action Steps:

- actively participate in Jefferson County Youth Investment Summit and follow-through with policy recommendations resulting from the Summit that impact economic security issues of the County's youth
- actively participate on the WIB Board
- actively participate on the WIB Youth Council and advise CWD and CPC of potential gaps in services to youth in the area of job readiness, marketable skills and employment

Coordinate services to fill the gap for older youth (16-24) who are not GED ready

Policy Council Action Steps:

- identify existing programs, the areas they serve and their funding sources
- survey youth to determine specific needs per age group
- investigate possibility of obtaining names and contact information of students upon their early departure (drop out) from school

Parent Involvement and Skills - Parents and

guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Employability skills (job skills and work ethic)

Policy Council Action Steps:

- create working relationship and partner with community businesses to commit to goal of becoming "family friendly"
- business and community leaders should become committed to improving the lives of children
- promote jobs for school age children to train for entering the workplace
- need for more caregivers for children and adults in need of caretakers to free up employees and potential employees

Adult illiteracy

Policy Council Action Steps:

- create greater availability of Adult Education programs
- expand business coalition to promote participation of employees in literacy programs

Policy Recommendation

1. Development of Pre-K curriculum guidelines.
2. Consolidate Childcare, Pre-K and Head Start under one comprehensive system.
3. Require licensing by DHR of all child care programs that operate more than four hours per day.
4. Statewide articulation agreement between community college and college-level Early Childhood Education Programs.
5. Conduct Market Rate surveys of child care providers every 2 yrs and establish new market rates at that time. Maximum rates should be set every two years at no less than the 75th percentile of Market Rate for child care providers.
6. Annually earmark general funds for child care to the extent needed to draw down all federal funds for child care.
7. Access to the Special Education trust Fund should be allowed to improve the quality of care for children from high risk families. To be eligible for funding providers must meet established standards of care and meet outcome measures.
8. Secure funding base for CHIP, All Kids, SOBRA Medicaid and Alabama Child Caring Foundation.
9. Fund a school health system for every public school campus
10. Institute a state statute that allows for information sharing of misdemeanors, felonies, school suspensions and school expulsions among school systems, law enforcement agencies, courts, Department of Human resources, Department of Mental Health and Department of Youth Services. To the extent practical such a law should have built in protections making such information protected and available only to those providing treatment within the systems named above.
11. Maintain money in the state education budget for professional development for educators and other school staff.
12. Establish minimum mileage for each school system in the state.
13. Establish an incentive program to recruit and retain special education teachers.
14. Universally fund pre-K for children age three and older.
15. Mandatory kindergarten starting at age 5.
16. Modify State law governing either youth or adult jurisdiction to include 18 year olds.
17. Examine granting eligibility for post-secondary education to Latino students who have successfully completed a public high school education in the state of Alabama.

Accomplishments

2004-05 Early Care and Education Goals:

- Create a fully functioning early care and education network that positively impacts the quality and coordination of child care in the community.
- Support and expand existing efforts to provide comprehensive screening of preschool children in the areas of vision, hearing, dental, development, speech, language, mental and health.

Accomplishments:

NETWORK

- Has met 9 times since October. Meet 1st Wednesday of the month from 9-10 or 10:30.
- Meetings have 20-25 representatives consistently (up from 4-7 last year)
- Diverse representation of community child care organizations, child care providers, public school, higher ed., Head Start, Early Intervention, developmental and health screening organizations, libraries, etc.
- Agendas include panel presentations from organizations, information and program sharing, reports from state and federal policy affecting young children, and updates from regional and statewide programs, like the Alabama Partnership for Children, which affect our community.

SCREENINGS:

Committee developed a survey to determine if screenings are administered in child care settings, what instruments are used and who administers them. 50 surveys were completed.

- Result: most providers didn't know what health screenings were, why they were needed and didn't express an interest in offering health or developmental screenings to children enrolled.
- Plans: Develop an array of educational experiences targeting early care and education providers on the importance of health and developmental screenings, follow-up and follow thru. Include info at conferences, workshops, etc. on screening children and have screening providers present at conferences to share screening tools and information about their organizations.

OTHER:

Week of the Young Child—Membership attended the City Council and had the 2nd week of April declared Week of the Young Child through a Resolution from the Mayor. City Council members were presented with gifts made by local preschoolers to commemorate their support. Governor Riley also gave a Proclamation.

2004-05 Health Committee Goal:

Establish a School Health Network

Accomplishments:

- Explored feasibility of a School Health Network
- Defined the Health Committee's role in the School Health Network
- Identified and recruited representatives from organizations such as School Nurses Association, Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation Children's Services Division, Children's Hospital Pediatric Pulmonary Center, etc. to help develop concept of School Health Network
- Received funding (\$50k) from Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham and Robert Meyer Foundation
- Recruited representatives from Jefferson County's 12 school systems to participate in the School Health Network

2004-05 Education Committee Goals:

- Facilitate linkage of educators and other professional staff to resources that promote best practices in quality education.
- Facilitate student and family ready access to after school programs

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Cathy Gassenheimer from Alabama Best Practices Center, a local superintendent and two local school principals presented Powerful Conversations about Staff Development to the CPC during Spring '05. Information about the presentation was sent to all 12 school systems in Jefferson County
- The Committee developed a directory of after school programs in Jefferson County
- The Committee visited and surveyed all after school providers in the Whatley School district in order to determine accessibility and availability of after school programs in the area. The Committee is working closely with an afterschool

program in the Whatley School district that has been funded through the 21st Century Grant in order to increase quality activities and student enrollment.

Economic Security goal:

System-wide coordination with the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board for job readiness, marketable skills and employment services available for youth

Accomplishment:

Youth Workforce Investment Summit with more than 80 participants

Additional Jefferson County Children's Policy Council Members:

Ashley H. Underwood	Madeline Swanson	Amy Sedus	Mark Brown	Sandy Donovan
Tracie Snipes	Cassandra Munzo	Lynnese Ferguson	Michael Windle	Kurt Dnninghoff
Sandy Mountz	Ruth Ross	Hazel Bass Germany	Gayle Cunningham	Jim Dearth
Kelly Teat	Tiffany Puncey	David Harris	Glenda Campbell	Liz McCormick
Paula Buice	Valerie Mattem	Cheryl Jackson	Tom Duley	Paulette Rowe
Vanessa Hunter-Beavers	Nerissa Degraffenreid	Kristi Guest	Maxine J. Pijeux	Carolyn Henshaw
Judy Jackson	Kelly Davis	Alice W. Johnson	Jan Davis	Virginia Sweet
Brooks Quintan	Jana Cook	Margie Curry	Calvin Moore	Harry Brown
Gladys Rancher	Brooke Burgess	Debra C. Lilly	Kristen Cooms	Mildred Sanders
Lori Ewoldsen	Stephanie Avant	Vickie Clark	Carletta Cullen	Kay Emfinger
Mary Cooksey	Deborah Thomas	Amy Nichols	Nancy Delamar	Mike Murrah
Diana T. Chamliss	John Duke	Tamika Elston	Charlie Trucks	Mike Barlow
Daisy Chandler	Anne L. Dixon	Nicole Kelley	Jo Veal Turner	Chris Retan

JEFFERSON COUNTY CHILDREN'S POLICY COUNCIL 2005 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

E. Lee Watkins	Kathryn Sellers	Janice Hanson	Carol Jordan	Theo Smith
Regina Allison	Allison Bagby	Shirley Stanton	J.R. White	Margie Curry
Kimberley L. Dees	Darrell Manning	Shirley Robinson	Jesse E. Sprayberry	Herman Lumzy
Tim Dollard	Leah Potter	Wilma Lewis	Jon Williamson	Gloria Anderson
Quinchela Dent	Doug Akins	Cheryl L. Jackson	Patricia Schmidt	Phillip Bahakel
Brian Stack	Linda Ford	Gwendolyn Welch	Shirley Worthington	Martha Jane Patton
Laird J. Sharpe	Sandy Killion	Candice Palmer	D. Lee Yount	Karen Musgrove
Gayle Cunningham	Stacie Fanguy	Bil Cox	Susan Zuber	Don Paoletti
Pat Schmidt	Kathryn Darnell	Lisa Whitaker	Penny Southward	Sunny Richards
Audrey Hendricks	Tara Boyd	Tami Standeffer	Larry W. Eans	Gale Roth
Debra Anderson-Burse	Erin Kattus	Tom Struzick	Jacinda Carlisle	Wallace Campbell
Deb Finley	Terri Robinson	Virginia Sweet	Jay Williams	Helen Bekrakis
Patricia Oaks	Alice Wibanks Johnson	Ann Florie	Heidi Rowe	Nancy Bush
Susan Hood	Charlotte Pelz	Andra Sparks	Kate Nielsen	Bob Blalock
Angela Mosley	Tom Vaughan	Mike Coppage	Byron M. Pigg	Al Rohling
Jeff Bridges	Suzanne Durham	Monca Jett	Scott Beason	
Bob Berry	Nate Loucks	Cynthia Murphy	J.T. Waggoner	
Sarah Harkless	M. Elaine Maxwell	Heidi Helmer	Rodger Smitherman	
Don Sivley	Sharon C. Bell	Cedric Sparks	Deborah Poe	
Amy L. Sloan	Doug McBee	Robert Matthews	Jodi Newton	
George Casey	Douglas Jefferson	Owen Duke, Sr.	Donnie Breaseale	
Gwen Welch	Jeff McGee	Tobert Matthews	Sharon Bell	
Paul McCaleb	Gary White	David Barber	Martha Rizzuto	
C.A. Hudson	Bettye Fine Collins	Susan Cotton	Linda Houghton	
Carolyn Henshaw	Mary Bulelew	Elisa Barclay	Yvette McPherson-Richardson	
Jim Loop	Larry Langford	Vincent Schillieci, Jr.	Wayman B. Shiver	
Beverly Francis	Caro Shanahan	Janis Sorell	Connie Williams	
Hazel Bass Germany	Norma Fisher	John Duke	Deborah Horn	
Cheryl Burns	Anita Scott-Smith	Eric Major	Bobby Nieghbors	

JEFFERSON COUNTY CHILDREN'S POLICY COUNCIL 2005 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Robin Graves	Steve Shaw	Albert Morton	Jamie Blair
Raymond Horn	Richard Craig	Jack Biddle III	Charles Mason
Beverly Hardy	Tom Hobbs	Curt Lee	
Jerry McIntosh	Zeva Hatcher	Edward McClain	
Mike Bramlet	Penny Rozell	Allen Sanderson	
Jeannie Ingram	Julie Cobb	Sundra Escott-Russell	
Johnny Jackson	Ava Rozell	John Hawkins, Jr.	
Gayle Watts	Bonnie Bradley	Demetruis Newton	
Jeff Wallace	Carole Samuelson	Priscilla Dunn	
William Waites	Mike Fleenor	Mark Gaines	
Julius Brown	J.T. Smelley	Steve French	
Ed Earnest	Megan Wetherbee	Oliver Robinson, Jr.	
Josephine Hollins	Sharron Denman	George Perdue	
Harry Long	Jeddie Dansby Carnes	Arthur Payne	
Laura Bloom	Randy Hebson	Jim Carns	